

**Memories of Mother and Dad-**  
**Holiday Fun and Traditions**  
**Glen and Alta Wanlass**  
**By Rhea Wanlass Lewis**

Holidays were fun for us. Mother would make us a nice lunch for Easter or we would roast hot-dogs up in the low hills. We would have cupcakes with a nest of green coconut and small candy eggs, and boiled eggs which she let us color. We had a banana and a bottle of Nehi orange or root beer. This was about the only time we had soda pop until we got older.

Christmas was a really special time at our home. About one week before, dad would take us to look for a perfect tree at one of the tree lots in town, often at some neighbor's home. We would look at every tree and something seemed wrong with each one. We usually ended up with one that lacked a limb or was too tall or not straight. I remember dad tying the tree to the curtain rod with a string to get it straight or drilling a hole in the trunk and inserting a limb cut from the bottom of the tree.

Mother would get the two dress boxes down from the top cupboard in the kitchen and decorate the tree. One box held large multi-colored lights, the other had the glass ornaments and then finally we could add some of the red and green paper chains on the back side of the tree before Mother put the beautiful white angel on top.

A little village with a couple of houses, Santa and his little plastic sleigh with white reindeer were put on a cotton snow field under the low branches. The gifts from neighbors and friends were placed around the side and back of the tree. Santa's gifts were never wrapped, but placed on our chair or sofa where we had hung our long brown stockings. Our socks always had an orange and nuts in the toe, along with a banana for our breakfast and usually a toy or two, like a watch or

ring.

Dad usually saw to it that we had a war bond or money on a tree limb. He was the more practical one, but mother loved to buy us gifts. I think because she never had many toys as a child. After we opened our gifts, dad would burn the paper in the fireplace, then we would visit all the neighbor kids and they would come see what we had.

Then we had a nice big dinner and then go to see grandma and grandpa in Provo. We loved to go see them. They were so kind and good to us. They usually had some cake or something good grandma had made, maybe a little hanky or perfume, but not much of a gift as they had so many grandchildren and not much money. Grandparents Wanlass usually spent the winter and Christmas in California so we didn't see them much except in the summer.

We usually stopped by Grant and June Butlers home on our way home from grandma's. Mother thought it was strange that they never showed us what they received for Christmas.

We would leave our gifts out for several days, thinking someone would stop by to see what we got. We took our dolls with us everywhere we went for a week or two, even to church. I remember we got a bike one year for the whole family. Stan got a wooden train once. Mother and dad usually didn't get much, probably because they spent all their money on us kids.

When we got a little older, I remember asking dad for \$5.00 to get him and mother a gift. I saw a clock I thought was pretty at Leany's store, so he finally gave me the money so I could get them something. I was happy when I finally was married that I appreciated how much those Christmas eves and days meant to me when I had to provide all the fun for my own family.

The Christmas of 1950, our brother Dallan came from Idaho to spend Christmas with our family. Mother prepared days ahead for him to come. We had

never been with him before. He planned on bringing his friend with him, but he ended up driving here alone in his old car in the winter snow. Dallan was 17 years old and probably wasn't an experienced driver, but he made it fine and we had such a good time together. He brought us all a gift. He brought Rhea a pink sweater. Mother got him a white neck scarf, which I still have in the cedar chest. We had a good time together.

He left to go back to Idaho a couple of days after Christmas. Our good neighbor, Mrs. Crabb heard on the radio that there had been a fatal car-train accident in Idaho and she recognized Dallan's name as the young man that had been killed. He and his friends were on their way to a ball game and dance when they were hit by a train engine. He was thrown from the car and died from a broken neck.

Mother was absolutely devastated and never got over the shock and sadness of losing her son. We traveled to Idaho in a terrible snowstorm for the funeral. It was snowing so hard, dad had to hold his head out of the window to see the edge of the road. We stayed overnight in a motel on the way. It was so bad and slippery. We attended the funeral at the church and went to the cemetery in a blizzard, we couldn't even get out of the car, the weather was so bad.

The next year, when the holidays were getting close, mother started to work part time at Devey's store in American Fork. She couldn't bear to spend all her time at home thinking about the past Christmas. She ended up working at Devey's for 25 years. She worked in the ladies department and was the buyer for that department for many of those years. She loved working there and would travel to New York and also Los Angeles to attend market. Dick Devey and Lily Walker would travel with her to market. She also took her sister, Della with her. She had such good taste in picking out jewelry and clothes for the store. Mother saw to it that we all had nice clothes and accessories as long as she worked there. The Devey family was good to mother and she was good to them, putting herself out many times to make sure everything in the store was just right. When I was in high school, I would go after the store closed with mother and on our hands and knees,

we would scrub the floor.